

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

By HAMILTON W. MABIE

MENTOR GRAVURES

By FREDERICK
BARNARD



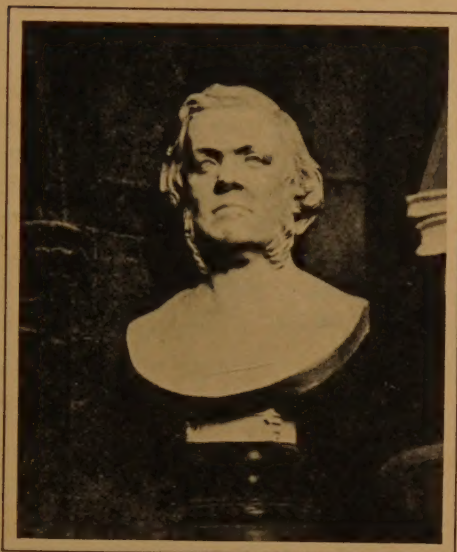
COLONEL NEWCOME

MAJOR PENDENNIS

BECKY SHARP



The Bust
of
Thackeray



MENTOR GRAVURES
By FREDERICK
BARNARD



MAJOR DOBBIN

THE LITTLE SISTER

CAPTAIN COSTIGAN



In
Westminster
Abbey

THE MENTOR • DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE SERIAL No. 91

IT was Thackeray's wish that he should have no biographer, and that wish has been respected so far as an authoritative life has been concerned. His daughter, Lady Ritchie, a delightful writer with a gift for personal reminiscence, has never gone further than a series of biographical introductions to the novels and other books, in which she has confined herself to bare recitals of the conditions under which the various books were written. And yet the personality of no other writer of Thackeray's distinction has awakened wider and deeper interest, or has more sharply defined itself to the imaginations of a host of the men and women whose opinions about such matters are most worth while.

This has been due to the intimate and confidential key in which the novels and sketches were written. A man of very deep feeling, to whom the modern habit of confiding one's experiences to every reporter eager for "copy" would have been repugnant, the author of "Pendennis" and "Vanity Fair" talked to his readers so freely and so intimately that he has been accused of being a preacher; a charge to which he would have pleaded guilty with a ring in his voice.

He has also been charged with talking too much about his characters, and not letting them talk enough about themselves; a charge to

which he would not only have pleaded guilty, but boldly declared that this discursive habit was a vital part of his method. He is so deeply concerned with the men and women of his fancy that he relieves the strain by taking a light tone toward them. It was a favorite device of his to represent himself as a showman exhibiting a group of puppets for the entertainment of the crowd. But the humorously deprecatory introduction to "Vanity Fair," with its ironical satisfaction in the patronage of the show by the public press and by the nobility and gentry, will blind no one who reads with intelligence to the big heart as well as the great brain behind a novel which many regard as the greatest work of English fiction.

For Thackeray, instead of being a cynic, was a sentimentalist, saved from the weakness of sentimentalism by his humor and his sense of art. No one has more happily and harmoniously combined the function of the satirist, the moralist, and the artist than the author of "The Newcomes."

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Thackeray came of a family which had furnished many preachers to the church; but, while he never hesitated to tag an occasion or an incident with a moral, it is impossible not to feel the soldierly quality in his nature, the gallantry, the sense of humor, the passion for protecting others, that made him the creator of two of the greatest gentlemen in fiction, Colonel Newcome and Colonel Henry Esmond.

His father and grandfather, however, were in the British civil service in India, and William Makepeace was born in Calcutta in July, 1811. His mother is described as a woman of fine presence, whom her son always treated with great deference. He was sent to the Charterhouse, a famous old school in London, which he was to immortalize later as the last home of Colonel Newcome, and one of his schoolmates writes that he was "a pretty, gentle, and rather timid boy," who achieved popularity, although he had no taste for games,



THACKERAY'S PARENTS

Mr. and Mrs. Richmond Thackeray with their little son, William Makepeace Thackeray. From a water-color by George Chimney



*'I share you please of the young lady
(only she was much prettier)*

A DRAWING BY THACKERAY OF HIMSELF
AT A DANCE

but soon developed great facility in making verses, especially parodies.

From this famous old school Thackeray went to a still more famous old college, Trinity College, Cambridge, the largest college in England, and intimately associated with some of the greatest men in English literature. In its fine library, near the beautiful bust of Byron, the visitor can see the manuscripts of "In Memoriam," "Henry Esmond," and other works by graduates of the college. In Thackeray's time there was a group of young men of notable promise in the ministry and in the "Cambridge Apostles." Mrs. Brookfield has drawn the portraits of many of them in one of the most delightful books of its kind in English literature.

FIRST WRITINGS

Young Thackeray does not appear to have been a very hard working or devoted student; but in his own way he was preparing for his career. The title of a magazine which appeared in Cambridge about that time, and to which Thackeray was a contributor, gave some indication of his satirical tendency. Another Trinity College student, Alfred Tennyson by name, had written a poem which took the Chancellor's prize for the year. The subject, "Timbuctoo," readily lends itself to humorous treatment, and Thackeray was quick to "improve the occasion":

I see her tribes the hill of glory mount,
And sell their sugars on their own account;
While round her throne the prostrate nations come,
Sue for her rice and barter for her rum.

After leaving Cambridge, Thackeray went to Weimar, where Goethe still held his court, the foremost figure in European literature of the day—or for that matter of any



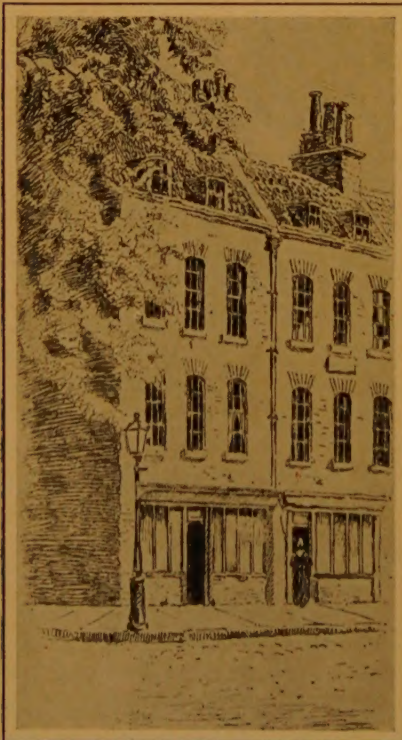
THE OLD CHARTERHOUSE, LONDON

As a boy Thackeray went to school there. From the drawing
by William Thomson

day since Shakespeare's time. It was then, and still is, a place of intellectual and artistic tradition and association, and in the marvelous commercial development of modern Germany it keeps the charm of the old Germany of simple habits and devotion to the interests of the spirit. Thackeray speaks of it as "The dear little Saxon city where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and are buried." Schiller had died years before in the little sleeping room of the modest apartment on the Schiller Strasse. Goethe was living in retirement in the large and



THACKERAY IN ROTTEN ROW, HYDE PARK, LONDON
From a water-color by D. Dighton



HERE THACKERAY LODGED IN LONDON
AS A YOUNG MAN

dignified house which was even then a museum. The young Englishman saw him three times, and was deeply impressed by his impressive personality, his piercing eyes, and his rich, sweet voice.

LIFE ABROAD

Between Weimar and Paris the future novelist, who was planning to become a painter, spent many happy and interesting months. He appeared then, and later, to be an idler; but the long array of substantial volumes which contain his work testify to his fruitful industry. The working habits of the artist in all fields are so individual that he often seems to be loitering when he is devoting himself to his task. Thackeray made very effective illustrations for his own books; but he never learned to draw. Some of his sketches are inimitable; but his range was narrow, and Dickens was probably wise in declining his offer to illustrate the "Pickwick Papers." The author of those

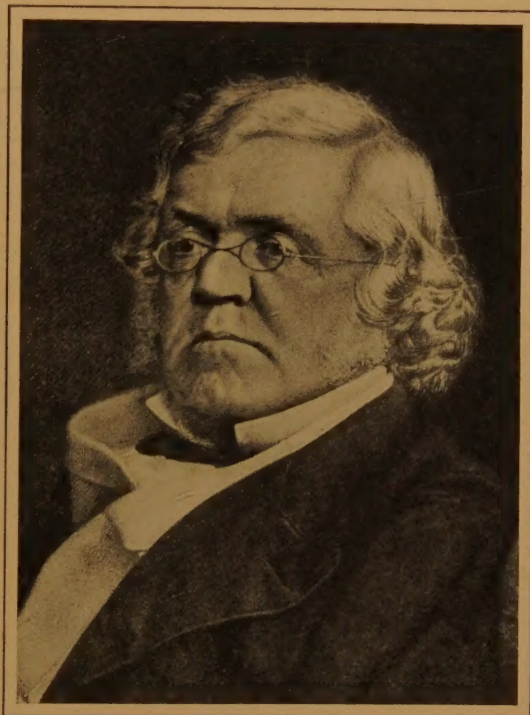
"Papers" was just getting his first glimpse of success, and the author of "Vanity Fair" was not only unknown, but was still trying to discover his vocation.

So far the young observer had looked at life with curious eyes, but had not felt its compelling hand on his shoulder. And there was no sign that his easy habits were to be changed; for at twenty-one a comfortable fortune, yielding an income of \$2,500, came his way. In two years the fortune was a memory. Some of it was invested in an Indian bank which went the way of many banks of that time; some of it was lost in the simple and direct way of starting a newspaper. The balance was taken by a card sharper in whose hands the guileless young giant was as amiable a victim as Moses Primrose when he bought the green spectacles at the fair in the "Vicar of Wakefield."

THACKERAY'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Having rid himself of the incumbrance of a steady income, Thackeray was now ready to come to terms with life. He started out with many advantages. He had youth and health; his great figure—he was as tall as Lincoln and heavily built—promised a long working day; he had a noble forehead, flowing hair, and eyes that were keen and affectionate. His nose had been broken in a schoolboy scrimmage, and he made the most of his misfortune for humorous purposes. He was fond of society, but was at his best only in the company of friends. There was a vein of melancholy in his nature, and sorrow did not spare him; but he was always as near laughter as tears, and he abounded in the nonsense which is the play of men of rich gifts of mind and nature.

Paper, ink, and pens were cheap and at hand, and the fortunate youth, delivered from idleness, turned to writing as an easy approach to a livelihood. As an approach it was readily accessible; as a path of life it was set with its own special variety of thorns. Thackeray started with the newspapers, and presently worked for the magazines. In 1837 and the year following the "History of Samuel Titmarsh" and the "Great Hoggarty Diamond" appeared in Fraser's Magazine, to which Car-



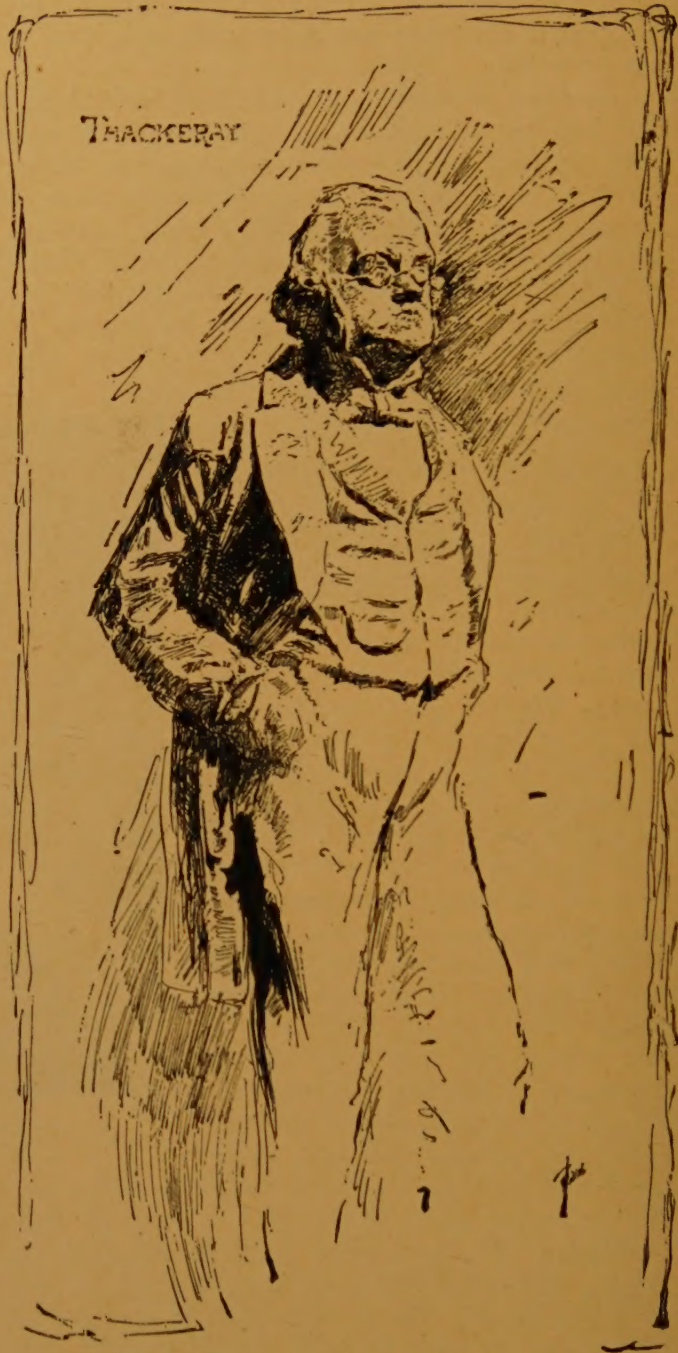
A LATE PHOTOGRAPH OF THACKERAY

lyle was then a contributor. Dickens was a year younger than Thackeray, but had already published "Oliver Twist" and "Nicholas Nickleby," as well as the "Pickwick Papers," and was already tasting the ripe fruits of a success as sudden as it was brilliant. Thackeray, on the other hand, was to wait long on fortune and to come slowly into his great inheritance of fame.

HIS MARRIED LIFE

In 1837 he married, with every prospect of the happiness which comes to those whose power of affection is steadied and sustained by vigor of character. After a few years his happiness was overshadowed by the illness of his wife, and later by her permanent mental disorder. To the end of his days he was married; but he had no wife! To a man of his nature no sorrow could have been more desolate and hopeless. In his three daughters, one of whom died in childhood, he found unfailing comfort and a companionship full of joy to him and to them.

The chapters in the "Paris Sketch Book" and many sketches of travel



Courtesy The Century Co.

THE BOHM STATUETTE
From the drawing by Blum

belong to this period. At this time, too, he made his fortunate connection with *Punch*, one of the few significant humorous journals in the world. *Punch* is a national institution; its humor is broad and vital; it has the sense of responsibility; and when a crisis comes doffs its cap and bells and more than once has given national feeling pictorial expression at once powerful and deeply serious. It never derides sacred things, never descends to cheap gibes at religion and morality; its humor, free from cynicism, plays over the whole surface of English life. From the beginning *Punch* has been served by able editors and illustrators, and during his ten years' connection with it Thackeray found much pleasure and profit in his association with the brilliant group who met at the weekly dinners. The "Snob Papers" appeared in *Punch*, as did many of the poems.

VANITY FAIR

He was not a great poet; but he had true poetic feeling, clear knowledge of what he could as well as what he could not do, and he was a deft and skilful versifier. More than one of his ballads and songs, like "The Mahogany Tree" and "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," will live because the sentiment flows clear and sweet through manly and happy lines. In "The Irish Sketch Book" there is plenty of good characterization. The time of apprenticeship came to an end with the publication of the first numbers of "Vanity Fair" in 1846. The story was finished two years later in the twenty-fourth number. Its author, at thirty-seven years of age, had published his first long novel, and that novel was a masterpiece. Of course its dimensions were not

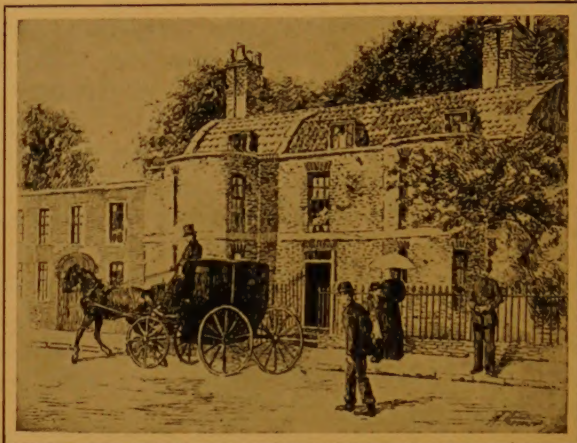
clearly sure at the start: the more vital and fundamental a work of art is the less likely is it to find its place until it is seen in perspective. The *Edinburgh Review*, however, went so far as to say that "a writer with such a pen and pencil as Mr. Thackeray's is an acquisition of real and high value in our literature."

While Thackeray never became popular in the sense in which Dickens was popular, the publication of "Vanity Fair" made him famous in the best sense: he became a man of distinction as well as a man about whom the newspapers talked. He had established himself in popular regard, and he had won that other reward which to the man of artistic feeling and aspiration is the most satisfying reward,—the recognition of that



THACKERAY'S HOME IN LONDON

smaller group of readers familiar with the best and demanding the best. For Thackeray was recognized not only as a great novelist, but as great writer,—a master of English prose. There are novelists who are read in spite of their lack of style, because they have the fresh manner and dramatic skill of the born storyteller. Thackeray will live not only because he knew well how to tell a story, but because he knew well how to make English prose simple, lucid, and beautiful. He was not a rapid workman, and he wrote not only with a sense of leisure, but at great length. After the completion of "Vanity Fair" in 1848 the other stories which constitute his permanent contribution to literature appeared at intervals of two years: "Pendennis" in 1850, "Henry Esmond" in 1852, and "The Newcomes" in 1854.



ONE OF THACKERAY'S LONDON HOMES
From the drawing by William Thomson



THACKERAY
From a rare photograph

THACKERAY AS A LECTURER

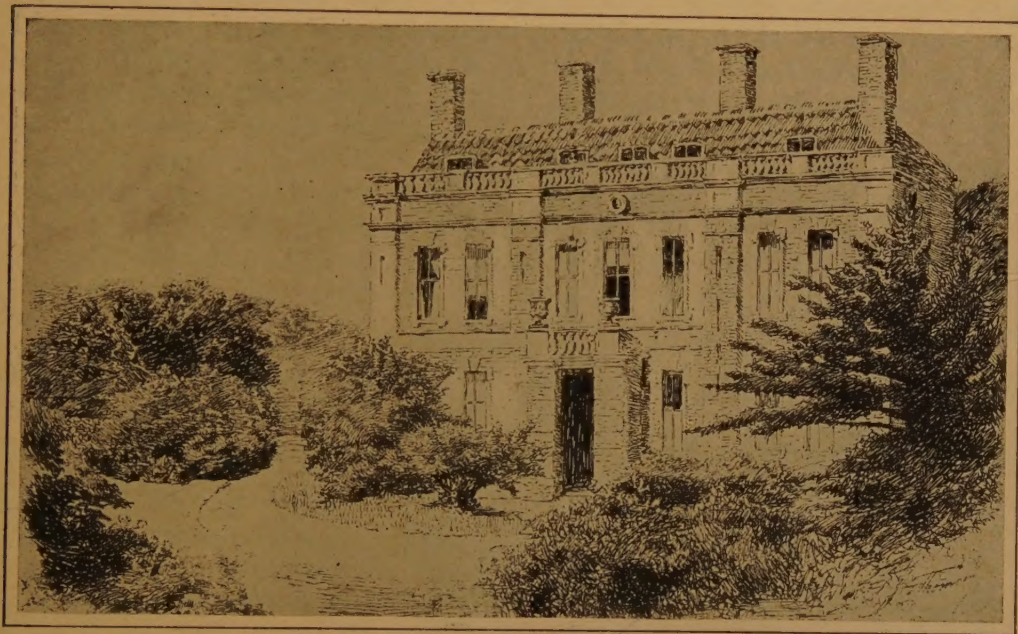
Preëminently a man of the world in the good sense of the word, a student of manners and customs as well as of men, Thackeray was deeply interested in the literature and life of the time of Queen Anne, when society in the technical sense not only brought men and women together on terms of equality, but became a form of institutional life. His study of this period bore fruit in "Henry Esmond" and in its sequel, "The Virginians." Its most important byproduct was the book on "The Humorists of the Eighteenth Century," the reading of which began Thackeray's career as a lecturer.

A year later, in the winter of 1852 and 1853, these lectures were heard with delight by large audiences in this country. He was not, like Dickens, a dramatic reader who, single-handed, could put a whole play on the stage; but his

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personality was impressive, he read clearly and simply, and the matter of his lectures had great human interest.

The series on the humorists was so successful that they were followed by a series on "The Four Georges," which were more popular in this country than in Great Britain, where many people felt that while the characterizations of the Georges were true, these sovereigns were so near in point of time that the novelist's freedom of speech was lacking in respect for the throne. It was only by a fiction that the Georges could be regarded as regal in any sense of the word, and nothing shows more



WHERE THACKERAY DIED
From the drawing by William Thomson

clearly the strength of the monarchical principle in Great Britain than the fact that the throne survived the Hanoverian kings who preceded Queen Victoria.

An attempt to secure a Liberal seat in Parliament fortunately failed. "The Virginians," begun in 1857, was finished in 1859. In the same year the novelist undertook the work of editing the Cornhill Magazine, which became very successful; though Thackeray must have found some of his duties irksome, and some of them very painful. In the pages of the Cornhill the "Adventures of Philip" appeared; a story which is not lacking the touch of the master hand, but in freshness and charm falls much below its predecessors. The novelist was at his best again in "Denis Duval"; but the day before Christmas, 1863, Thackeray died suddenly in the house he had built less than two years before at Palace Green. He was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, whither many people

of distinction had preceded him, and a bust in his memory was placed in Westminster Abbey.

THACKERAY'S PLACE IN LITERATURE

Probably no literary reputation of the brilliant Victorian Period rests on more secure foundations than that of Thackeray, and the reasons are not far to seek,—he was a moralist, a satirist, and an artist. This is a very rare combination of qualities. It means that the novelist dealt with permanently significant aspects of character and life, that his portraits were vigorous in drawing, that humor was kept well away from farce and sentiment from sentimentality, and the manner of the work would keep it alive if the interest of its subjects and point of view passed. Innocent young readers to whom mid-Victorian pictures and books are decorated

commonplace, read Thackeray today and find him neither sentimental nor "preachy," and they are quick to recognize the soundness and beauty of his style. He was delivered from the tendency to "mushiness" either of feeling or of aim by his satirical tendency. His feeling was deep and sincere; but it never became hysterical or unreal. Those who cannot recognize feeling unless it gushes like a geyser agreed that he was a cynic. The best answer to this misjudgment was made by his old friend of the Punch fellowship, Shirley Brooks, who wrote the noble apology to Lincoln:

He was a cynic! By his life all wrought
Of generous acts, mild words, and
gentle ways;
His heart wide open to all kindly
thought,
His hand so quick to give, his tongue
to praise.

Mr. Brownell has said that while Balzac's insight proceeds from his curios-



Courtesy Harper's Magazine

BECKY SHARP AND LORD STEYNE
From the painting by Howard Pyle

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

ity, that of Thackeray proceeds from sympathy. His men and women are free from exaggeration, they are wonderfully distinct, and they work out their destiny without compulsion from the creator. Everybody remembers in what gloom the death of Colonel Newcome plunged Thackeray.

And his people are always presented in their relation with society. They are not simple, like many of Dickens' people: they are often very complex, and their weaknesses are never exaggerated. They live in a much more complicated and artificial society than that which Dickens described, and the character drawing is delicate; and it is in this bringing into view of more elusive influences, this more subtle and intimate study of what may be social details, that the range and quality of Thackeray's style are revealed. Such a portrait as that of Beatrice Esmond in her brilliant youth and her cynical old age is a piece of almost flawless art. As a novelist of society Thackeray has no superior. He is always a moralist, and described himself as a lay preacher, and foreign critics have spoken of his habit of moralization as blurring his art. He loved to talk about his characters; but his comment was so much a part of his method and was so delightful in itself that it serves as an expression of the English temper and way of looking at life rather than a *flaw* or defect in an art so devoid of effort and so intimately conversational that it seems like a natural way of speaking until one tries to reproduce its ease and charm, and then it is found to be exceedingly difficult.

A great brain, a great heart, and a beautiful genius made "Vanity Fair" the peer of the greatest works of fiction in any language, "Henry Esmond" an almost flawless picture of a bygone society, and "The Newcomes" a romance of a noble gentleman.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

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| WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
<i>By C. Whibley</i> | LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN FAMILY
<i>By W. M. Thackeray</i> |
| WILLIAM M. THACKERAY
<i>By Chesterton and Benjamin</i> | VICTORIAN PROSE WRITERS
(Chapter on Thackeray.) <i>By W. C. Brownell</i> |
| SOME ASPECTS BY THACKERAY
<i>By L. S. Benjamin</i> | IN THACKERAY'S LONDON
<i>F. Hopkinson Smith</i> |
| THACKERAY COUNTRY
<i>By L. S. Benjamin</i> | INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL
EDITION OF THACKERAY
<i>By Lady Ritchie</i> |
| THACKERAY IN AMERICA
<i>By G. W. Curtis</i> | CHAPTER ON THACKERAY IN "THE
WORLD'S BEST LITERATURE" |
| A COLLECTION OF LETTERS OF THACKERAY
1847-1855, with numerous portraits and drawings | LIFE OF THACKERAY
<i>By Merivale and Marzials'</i> |
| LIFE OF THACKERAY—"English Men of Letters Series."
<i>By Anthony Trollope</i> | |



Many attempts have been made at comparative appraisal of Thackeray and Dickens as novelists. The subject has been a fruitful one for literary societies, and debating clubs have thrived on it for years. While no very profitable results may come out of such discussions it is interesting in a literary way to consider the two authors together. They lived at the same time and both employed their pens largely in picturing the people of their time. But they were radically different in character, in views, in modes of thought, and methods of expression. Each stood, in his own way, distinctively above his contemporaries.

Each vitalized a world of characters of his own making. Major Pendennis and Mr. Pickwick are not mere fictional figures. They are so real in their existence that their names, as someone has well said, ought to be in the directory. If we met Pendennis and Pecksniff walking side by side and conversed with them we would have a vivid realization of one essential difference between Thackeray and Dickens. Pecksniff could not be Thackeray's creation, nor could Pendennis be Dickens'. One is a character; the other a caricature. A critic once made the observation that a marked difference between Dickens and Thackeray was that Dickens wrote in many moods and Thackeray wrote chiefly in one mood—that Dickens was essentially histrionic and fell into the spirit of his different characters, actually "playing their parts" while he wrote them. Thackeray wrote in a detached mood, creating his characters and inspiring them to develop themselves, while he followed their careers with keen appreciation—at times sympathetic, at times satirical, but always himself, Thackeray. The visits of the two novelists to America strikingly illustrate the difference just noted. Dickens' second visit to America was a tour of readings from his novels, in which he



THE BOY THACKERAY
From a bust of the novelist
at the age of eleven, made
by J. Deville, June 1, 1822

presented his characters to his audiences in a dramatic fashion. Thackeray delivered a course of lectures.

Their lives were entirely different. Dickens was born in great poverty, and his early years were full of bitter struggle. Thackeray's youth was passed in comfortable circumstances. He was born in Calcutta in July, 1811, his father and grandfather both having been in the Indian civil service. His mother was left a widow in 1816 and brought Thackeray to England as a small child. He was educated in private schools and was well cared for. At that time he was regarded as a pretty, gentle,

rather timid, and sensitive boy. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, but in 1830 he left without taking any degree and traveled for a year in Europe. He tried the law, but did not like it. In 1832 he came into an income of about \$2,500 a year. This money was soon lost; and then, being poor enough to "qualify for an art career" Thackeray went to Paris to study.

He always wanted to be an artist. Some said that he liked to make pictures better than to write stories. But publishers could not see his art as he did. He was urged to devote himself to writing—and the world is the richer therefore. "Vanity Fair" came out in 1846, and the public recognized that there was a new fixed star in the literary firmament. "Pendennis," "Henry Esmond," and "The Newcomes" followed, and then "The Virginians." He tried editing for a while, but gave it up. He was at work on "Denis Duval" when he died, December 24, 1863. He was buried in Kensal Green, and his likeness in marble stands among the immortals in Westminster Abbey.

W.D. Moffat
EDITOR



BECKY SHARP, BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM "VANITY FAIR"

William Makepeace Thackeray

BECKY SHARP, from "VANITY FAIR"

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course

BECKY SHARP stands for the supreme type of social struggler. She has been called the cleverest, most unmoral woman in the whole range of fiction. From the moment of leaving Miss Pinkerton's school, when she tosses out of the window of the coach Johnson's dictionary, the last gift of her teacher, to her final appearance in the novel, she never hesitates nor falters in the game of bluff that she plays with the world.

When the story of "Vanity Fair" opens Becky Sharp is revealed as about as keen, brilliant; and selfish a young person of eighteen as ever lived. Thackeray describes her appearance and upbringing in the following words: "Miss Sharp's father was an artist, and, in that quality, had given drawing lessons at Miss Pinkerton's school. He was a clever man; a pleasant companion; a careless student, with a great propensity for running into debt and a partiality for the tavern. When he was drunk, he used to beat his wife and daughter; and the next morning, with a headache, he would rail at the world for its neglect of his genius, and abuse, with a good deal of cleverness, and sometimes with perfect reason, the fools, his brother painters . . .

"Rebecca's mother had had some education somewhere, and her daughter spoke French with purity and a Parisian accent . . .

"Rebecca was small and slight in person; pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down; when they looked up, they were very large, odd, and attractive . . .

"By the side of many tall and bouncing young ladies in the establishment, Rebecca Sharp looked like a child. But she had the dismal precocity of poverty. Many a dun had she talked to and turned away from her father's door; many a tradesman had she coaxed and wheedled into good humor; and into the granting of one meal more."

Becky Sharp first went to visit the family of her school friend, Amelia Sedley, and on their shoulders she first climbed toward the dizzy heights of an assured social position. Rawdon Crawley was a ready victim. He was a son of Sir Pitt Crawley, baronet, and Becky married him.

Her environment offered a great field to the genius of Thackeray. He portrayed fashionable England at the beginning of the nineteenth century with a skill that has hardly ever been equaled. But with all his skill in picking out every human weakness and every fallacy of the gay world, and in portraying Becky Sharp, the consummate actress, with her victims, he does not forget that some women are tender and some men are worthy.



MAJOR DOBBIN, BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM "VANITY FAIR"

William Makepeace Thackeray

MAJOR DOBBIN, from "VANITY FAIR"

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course



MAJOR DOBBIN is only one of a number of characters portrayed by Thackeray so admirably and with such true nature in his greatest novel, "Vanity Fair." As the despised "Figs" at Dr. Swishtail's school for young gentlemen, even as a boy, he showed the chivalrous traits of character that, later, were to endear him to his friends and to many readers of the novel. At one time in school one of the younger boys was being tormented by the school bully, Cuff. Young William Dobbin took the small boy's part, and, so surprised was the young aristocrat, Reginald Cuff, that he hardly had breath enough to gasp out a challenge.

At the beginning of the fight, young Dobbin had all the worst of it, but, by dogged persistence and sheer courage, he finally got the upper hand. This is the way Thackeray describes this boyish combat:

"Figs' left made terrific play during all the rest of the combat. Cuff went down every time. At the sixth round there were almost as many fellows shouting out, 'Go it, Figs,' as there were youths exclaiming, 'Go it, Cuff.' At the twelfth round the latter champion was all abroad, as the saying is, and had lost all presence of mind and power of attack or defense. Figs, on the contrary, was as calm as a Quaker. His face being quite pale, his eyes shining open, and a great cut on his under lip bleeding profusely, gave this young fellow a fierce and ghastly air, which perhaps struck terror into many spectators. Nevertheless, his intrepid adversary prepared to close for the thirteenth time.

"If I had the pen of a Napier, or a Bell's Life, I should like to describe this combat properly. It was the last charge of the Guard—that is it *would* have been, only Waterloo had not yet taken place); it was Ney's column breasting the hill of La Haye Sainte, bristling with ten thousand bayonets, and crowned with twenty eagles; it was the shout of the beef-eating British, as, leaping down the hill, they rushed to hug the enemy in the savage arms of battle; in other words, Cuff coming up full of pluck, but quite reeling and groggy, the fig merchant put in his left as usual on his adversary's nose, and sent him down for the last time.

"'I think *that* will do for him,' Figs said, as his opponent dropped as neatly on the green as I have seen Jack Spot's ball plump into the pocket at billiards; and the fact is, when time was called, Mr. Reginald Cuff was not able, or did not choose, to stand up again."

The boy whose champion young Dobbin had become was George Osborne, and even in after years, when William rose far above the social position that George occupied, he did not in the least alter his feelings toward young Osborne. The two entered the army in the same regiment, and served together, and Dobbin's attachment for George was as warm and loyal then as when they were schoolboys together.



THE LITTLE SISTER, BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP

William Makepeace Thackeray

THE LITTLE SISTER, from "THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP"

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course



AROLINE BRANDENBURG GANN, "The Little Sister," had a most unhappy girlhood, and a not much more cheerful after life. She appears first in the short tale called "A Shabby Genteel Story." In this story, after many hardships as a child, she meets what she considers her Fairy Prince, Mr. Branden, a lodger of her mother's, and marries him.

Later on, in "The Adventures of Philip," she appears, disowned and deserted by her wicked husband, whose real name was Brand Firmin, the father of Philip. This is the manner in which she discovers that Philip's father is her faithless husband:

"I don't know who gave her the nickname, but she had a good, roomy house in Thornhaugh Street, an artist on the first and second floor; and there never was a word of scandal against the Little Sister. As we called her 'the Little Sister,' her father was called 'the Captain'—a bragging, lazy, good-natured old man—not a reputable captain—and very cheerful, though the conduct of his children, he said, had repeatedly broken his heart.

"I don't know how many years the Little Sister had been on duty when Philip Firmin had his scarlet fever. It befell him at the end of his term, just when all the boys were going home. As Phil's father was absent, Dr. Goodenough came, and sent his nurse in. The case grew worse, so bad that Doctor Firmin was summoned from the Isle of Wight, and arrived one evening at Grey Friars. . .

"Phil was in a great room, in which were several empty beds of boys gone home for the holidays. The windows were opened into Grey Friars Square. Goodenough heard his colleague's carriage drive up, and rightly divined that Phil's father had arrived. He came out, and met Firmin in the anteroom.

"'Head has wandered a little. Better now, and quiet;' and the one doctor murmured to the other the treatment which he had pursued.

"Firmin stepped in gently towards the patient, near whose side the Little Sister was standing.

"'Who is it?' asked Phil.

"'It is I, dear. Your father,' said Dr. Firmin, with real tenderness in his voice.

"The Little Sister turned round once, and fell down like a stone by the bedside. 'You infernal villain!' said Goodenough, with an oath, and a step forward. 'You are the man!'

"'Hush! The patient, if you please, Dr. Goodenough,' said the other physician."

Philip married finally, and Thackeray tells of the last days of the Little Sister in the following words:

"Our dear Little Sister would never live with Philip and his Charlotte, though the latter *especially*, and with all her heart, besought Mrs. Brandon to come to them. That pure, and useful, and modest life ended a few years since. She died of a fever caught from one of her patients. She would not allow Philip or Charlotte to come near her. She said she was justly punished for being so proud as to refuse to live with them. All her little store she left to Philip. He has now, in his desk, the five guineas which she gave him at his marriage; and J. J. has made a little picture of her, with her sad smile and her sweet face, which hangs in Philip's drawing-room, where father, mother, and children talk of the Little Sister as though she were among them still."



COLONEL NEWCOME. BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM "THE NEWCOMES"

William Makepeace Thackeray

COLONEL NEWCOME, from "THE NEWCOMES"

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course



COLONEL NEWCOME has been called the finest gentleman to be found in fiction. The novel in which he appears, "The Newcomes," is one of the greatest novels that the world has ever seen. It shows English society in the first half of the eighteenth century, in a manner sincere and lifelike, and the individuals portrayed therein are true human beings.

The story opens with the release from school of Clive Newcome, son of Colonel Newcome. This school Thackeray calls "Grey Friars," by which he meant to designate the Charter House School which Thackeray himself attended. Clive's father had come all the way from India to rejoice in the possession of his son, and, himself a graduate of Grey Friars, to renew his old associations.

But Clive's career proves to be a failure. He is in love with his cousin Ethel Newcome, but her family ambitions will not permit a marriage.

Then Clive makes a most unfortunate marriage himself, and success as an artist does not come to him. Colonel Newcome loses his fortune, and, in his old age, becomes a pensioner of Grey Friars. The quiet pathos of his last days is something readers never forget:

"The days went on, and our hopes, and hopes sometimes, began to flicker and fail. One evening the Colonel left his chair for his bed in pretty good spirits, but passed a disturbed night, and the next morning was too weak to rise. Then he remained in his bed, and his friends visited him there. One afternoon he asked for his little gown-boy, and the child was brought to him, and sat by the bed with a very awe-stricken face; and then gathered courage, and tried to amuse him by telling him how it was a half-holiday, and they were having a cricket-match with the St. Peter's boys in the green, and Grey Friars was in and winning. The Colonel quite understood about it; he would like to see the game; he had played many a game on that green when he was a boy. He grew excited; Clive dismissed his father's little friend, and put a sovereign into his hand; and away he ran to say that Codd Colonel had come into a fortune, and to buy tarts, and to see the match out.

"Some time afterwards Ethel came in with a scared face to our pale group. 'He is calling for you again, dear lady,' she said, going up to Madame de Florac, who was still kneeling; 'and just now he said he wanted Pendennis to take care of his boy. He will not know you.' She hid her tears as she spoke.

"She went into the room where Clive was at the bed's foot; the old man within it talked on rapidly for awhile; then again he would sigh and be still; once more I heard him say hurriedly, 'Take care of him when I'm in India;' and then, with a heartrending voice, he called out, 'Lenore, Lenore.' She was kneeling by his side now. The patient's voice sank into faint murmurs; only a moan now and then announced that he was not asleep.

"At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar, sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master."

Clive and Ethel, each free to begin life anew, met at his deathbed, and the novel ends with a prospect of their final happiness.



MAJOR PENDENNIS. BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM "PENDENNIS"

William Makepeace Thackeray

MAJOR PENDENNIS, from "PENDENNIS"

Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course



MAJOR PENDENNIS was a typical old man-about-town. He was worldly minded; but, at the same time, his heart beat strong and true beneath his cynically cosmopolitan exterior. He it was who, when Pendennis, the brilliant yet spoiled boy, fell in love with an actress ten years older than himself, rescued him from her clutches. Here is Thackeray's picture of him:

"One fine morning in the full London season, Major Arthur Pendennis came over from his lodgings, according to his custom, to breakfast at a certain club in Pall Mall, of which he was a chief ornament. At a quarter-past ten the Major invariably made his appearance in the best blacked boots in all London, with a checked morning cravat, that never was rumpled until dinner-time, a buff waistcoat which bore the crown of his sovereign on the buttons, and linen so spotless that Mr. Brummell himself asked the name of his laundress, and would probably have employed her had not misfortunes compelled that great man to fly the country. Pendennis's coat, his white gloves, his whiskers, his very cane, were perfect of their kind as specimens of the costume of a military man *en retraite*. At a distance, or seeing his back merely, you would have taken him to be not more than thirty years old; it was only by a nearer inspection that you saw the factitious nature of his rich brown hair, and that there were a few crows' feet round about the somewhat faded eyes of his handsome mottled face. His nose was of the Wellington pattern. His hands and wristbands were beautifully long and white. On the latter he wore handsome gold buttons given to him by His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and on the others more than one elegant ring, the chief and largest of them being emblazoned with the famous arms of Pendennis.

"He always took possession of the same table in the same corner of the room, from which nobody ever now thought of ousting him. One or two mad wags and wild fellows had, in former days, endeavored to deprive him of this place; but there was a quiet dignity in the Major's manner as he took his seat at the next table, and surveyed the interlopers, which rendered it impossible for any man to sit and breakfast under his eye; and that table—by the fire and yet near the window—became his own. His letters were laid out there in expectation of his arrival, and many was the young fellow about town who looked with wonder at the number of these notes, and at the seals and franks which they bore. If there was any question about etiquette, society, who was married to whom, of what age such and such a duke was, Pendennis was the man to whom every one appealed. Marchionesses used to drive up to the Club and leave notes for him, or fetch him out. He was perfectly affable. The young men liked to walk with him in the Park of down Pall Mall; for he touched his hat to everybody, and every other man he met was a lord."

In his old age Major Pendennis settled down, and his chief happiness was when Laura, the wife of Pendennis, would read to him with her sweet voice or listen with rapt attention to his favorite stories.



CAPTAIN COSTIGAN. BY FREDERICK BARNARD

FROM PENDENNIS

William Makepeace Thackeray

CAPTAIN COSTIGAN, from "PENDENNIS"

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course



CAPTAIN COSTIGAN was the father of Pendennis's first love, Miss Costigan, or, as she was known on the stage, Miss Fotheringay. This attractive and clever young lady was ten years older than Pendennis, and the impressionable youth was rescued from her clutches only by the persistent efforts of his uncle, Major Pendennis.

Thackeray introduces Captain Costigan in this manner:

"General or Captain Costigan—for the latter was the rank which he preferred to assume—was seated in the window with the newspaper held before him at arm's length. The Captain's eyes were somewhat dim; and he was spelling the paper, with the help of his lips as well as of those bloodshot eyes of his, as you see gentlemen do to whom reading is a rare and difficult occupation. His hat was cocked very much on one ear; and as one of his feet lay up in the window seat, the observers of such matters might remark by the size and shabbiness of the boots which the Captain wore, that times did not go very well with him. Poverty seems as if it were disposed, before it takes possession of a man entirely, to attack his extremities first: the coverings of his head, feet, and hands, are its first prey. All these parts of the Captain's person were particularly rakish and shabby. As soon as he saw Pen he descended from the window seat and saluted the newcomer, first in a military manner by conveying a couple of his fingers (covered with a broken black glove) to his hat, and then removing that ornament altogether. The Captain was inclined to be bald, but he brought a quantity of lank iron-gray hair over his pate and had a couple of wisps of the same falling down on each side of his face. Much whisky had spoiled what complexion Mr. Costigan may have possessed in his youth. His once handsome face had now a copper tinge. He wore a very high stock, scarred and strained in many places; and a dress coat tightly buttoned up in those parts where the buttons had not parted company from the garment. . . .

"He began life rather brilliantly with a pair of colors, a fine person and legs, and one of the most beautiful voices in the world. To his latest day he sang with admirable pathos and humor those wonderful Irish ballads which are so mirthful and so melancholy; and was always the first himself to cry at their pathos. Poor Cos! he was at once brave and maudlin, humorous, and an idiot; always good natured, and sometimes almost trustworthy. Up to the last day of his life he would drink with any man, and back any man's bill: and his end was in a sponging house where the sheriff's officer, who took him, was fond of him.

"In his brief morning of life, Cos formed the delight of regimental messes, and had the honor of singing his songs, bacchanalian and sentimental, at the tables of the most illustrious generals and commanders-in-chief, in the course of which period he drank three times as much claret as was good for him, and spent his doubtful patrimony. What became of him subsequently to his retirement from the army is no affair of ours. I take it no foreigner understands the life of an Irish gentleman without money, the way in which he manages to keep afloat—the wind-raising conspiracies in which he engages with heroes as unfortunate as himself—the means by which he contrives, during most days of the week, to get his portion of whisky-and-water: all these are mysteries to us inconceivable; but suffice it to say, that through all the storms of life Jack had floated somehow, and the lamp of his nose had never gone out."